



NEWS RELEASE

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**NEIGHBORHOOD PROSECUTION TEAM EXPANDS
BEWARE CRIME BUSTERS AT WORK!**

City's Collaborative Crime-Fighting Team is Getting Results!

San Diego, CA -- They are “neighborhood prosecutors” – crime busters who work together with police officers, community members, and community-based organizations. Their mission is to improve the quality of life in San Diego’s neighborhoods by fighting and preventing crimes, including graffiti, prostitution, drugs and transient activity, and illegal street racing. Their teamwork is getting results. And that’s why San Diego’s innovative, nationally-recognized Neighborhood Prosecution Unit is expanding.

Today, San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn and San Diego Police Chief David Bejarano announced the addition of two deputy city attorneys and two San Diego Police officers to the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit of the City Attorney’s Office. The Neighborhood Prosecution team was the first of its kind in San Diego County and is presently the largest team, expanding into downtown San Diego as well as the beach areas. The City Attorney’s Office and the Police Department received two grants from the U.S. Department of Justice, totaling \$300,000, to allow for the addition of the downtown neighborhood prosecutor and the two police officers now assigned to the unit.

“The Neighborhood Prosecution Unit adopts the philosophy of community-oriented criminal justice,” City Attorney Casey Gwinn said. “These prosecutors are out in their assigned communities every day, seeing problems first-hand, working with police officers and community members, and developing innovative solutions, including aggressive enforcement and prosecution, legislative changes, and preventative and educational programs designed to make San Diego’s neighborhoods safer and crime-free. We are pleased to

(more)



San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

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Neighborhood Prosecution Unit

announce the expansion of the unit because it shows that the neighborhood prosecutors are making a difference. Downtown was natural because of all the revitalization, and the beach areas are very active with quality of life crime issues.”

The Neighborhood Prosecution Unit, headed by Deputy City Attorney Joan Dawson, is now composed of six deputy city attorneys, who are assigned to work in the San Diego Police Department’s Central, Mid-City, Northern, and Western Divisions. One deputy in the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit serves as the substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation deputy.

“Community policing can only go so far. We will have a greater impact working with these neighborhood prosecutors,” said Police Chief Bejarano. “That’s why I support the City Attorney’s Neighborhood Prosecution Unit, and I have assigned two full-time police officers to the team.”

Today’s announcement by the City Attorney and the Police Chief was made at a pedestrian tunnel at 33rd and K Streets, off Imperial Avenue, in the Stockton area of San Diego. This tunnel, which has been a cause of community concern for ten years, is one of the latest projects the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit is tackling. The tunnel is the site of transient and drug activity, gang activity, and graffiti. During 2001, San Diego Police Department statistics show that there were 56 reported crimes against property and individuals within two-tenths of a mile radius from the tunnel. The tunnel is a few blocks from King Elementary School. The Neighborhood Prosecution Unit plans to work with the community to clean up the tunnel area and make it safer for the community to use. A community meeting is planned for this Saturday, April 20, at 9:30 a.m. at King Elementary, 415 31st Street, to discuss the tunnel project.

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